

WINTER EDITION
JANUARY 2021

VA Boston Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Service Newsletter

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Welcome to PM&RS Our New Service Line Care Manager

Stephanie O'Connor



I was born and raised in NY State, and after serving 6 years in the military as a C-130 Crew Chief then Flight Engineer, I completed my education to become a Physical Therapist in Virginia. I have participated in the National Veterans Summer Sport Clinic (NVSSC) in San Diego for 8 years, which is where I met a great team from Boston VA. The wonderful crew of recreational/occupational/physical therapists and nurses that I interact at the NVSSC sparked my interest in the Boston VA. Therefore, when an opportunity presented itself this Summer, I was inspired to apply. I am grateful to have joined the Boston PMR team in October 2020.

My 20 years as a physical therapist has been in a variety of settings- acute care, outpatient, and inpatient rehab, but i have an affinity towards amputation and wound care and adaptative sports. I cherish my moments with my fellow veterans in all settings; and anytime when I can provide service that can improve their function and/or quality of life.

I have moved towards leadership over the past 7 years as a Physical Therapy Supervisor and on to PMR Program Manager. This has afforded me the opportunity to serve in many roles and gain experience with Polytrauma/TBI Program, Amputation System of Care, Physical Therapy Residency Director, Intermediate Low Vision Program Supervisor. Subsequently gaining intimate knowledge of CARF, Joint Commission, Long Term Care and Residency Accreditation.

I enjoy working with clinicians to improve processes, remove barriers and build new programs that strengthen the care the veterans receive from the VA.

The fun and serious side of Stephanie:



Working from home
...not!



In PAPR on
COVID Unit



COVID
Screener

The first picture was of me in my office- when things first started getting bad with COVID19, I had huddles and once a week I would dress up to lighten the mood as morale was low. Most had the opportunity to work from home - so I started the meeting like that -pretending I got to work from home – LOL!

The second is the PAPR we used when working the COVID unit.

The last one is me working in the outside screening booth at Jefferson Barracks VA in St. Louis.

Welcome Aboard!

**Welcome to PMRS
Our new
Physiatrist**

Dr. Xin Li



I finished my residency at Northwestern Memorial Hospital/Shirley Ryan Ability Lab and went on to complete a polytrauma/traumatic brain injury fellowship at Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Hospital in Richmond VA.

I have always enjoyed working with veterans and that is why I chose to do my fellowship at the VA. I am from the Boston area and, unfortunately, no positions were open at the VA system in MA after my fellowship, so I spend 2 years at Rhode Island Hospital. I started the inpatient consult service at Rhode Island Hospital.

In 2019, I started a position at the Bedford VA and had a wonderful experience. Then in 2020, the Medical Director position for CIIRP was opened and I jumped at the opportunity to be able to work with a strong rehabilitation team. "I'm very happy to be a contributing member of the team."

Welcome Aboard!

PM&RS Services at VA Boston

A Quick Overview

Physiatry: Our Physiatrists, or rehabilitation physicians, are nerve, muscle, and bone experts that treat injuries or illnesses that affect how patients' move. There are roughly four Physiatrists working in the PM&R Service at VA Boston, across the three campuses

Physical Therapy: Our PTs are dedicated in helping reduce pain and improve or restore mobility. There are over 30 PTs and three Physical Therapist Assistants that cover all three campuses and the Lowell Outpatient Clinic.

Occupational Therapy: Our OTs treat injured, ill, or disabled patients through the therapeutic use of everyday activities. There are over 15 OTs dispersed throughout all three campuses.

Kinesiotherapy: Our KT's are here to help evaluate and treat patients' mobility, strength, and endurance. There are two KT's and one Kinesiotherapy Assistant across the three campuses.

Driver Training: Our driver training program, overseen by the Occupational Therapy Department, is designed to give patients a plan to modify their driving skills based on need. They work with a variety of medical conditions that include, but are not limited to, amputation, stroke, and spinal cord injury.

Wheelchair Clinic: Wheelchair clinic offers a comprehensive evaluation process to provide patients with the most appropriate wheelchair and seating option that will improve their access to home and community.

Inpatient Acute Rehabilitation program at West Roxbury Campus: An interdisciplinary inpatient rehabilitation program for Veterans with medical, neurological, orthopedic, cardiac, and vascular conditions. This 5 bed inpatient program is located at the West Roxbury Campus. This program is formally called the Comprehensive Integrated Inpatient Rehabilitation Program and is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Admission Criteria includes:

- Onset of injury, medical or surgical event resulting in the need (in at least two therapeutic disciplines, e.g. physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, pain management, wound care, and/or cognitive rehabilitation) for rehabilitation was within the past ninety days unless complicating factors exist;
- Veteran has specific functional improvement goals with a projected time frame;
- Veteran is medically stable for at least 24 hours and can actively and safely participate in the rehabilitation program (2-3 hours daily; 6-7 days per week);
- Veteran agrees to participate in rehabilitation and;
- Discharge setting is either to prehospital living setting or alternative living options have been identified with necessary support systems in place.

If you are interested in this program, please contact **Elizabeth Desir**, Administrative Officer [857-203-6858](tel:857-203-6858)

PM&R Services



INPATIENT SERVICES

West Roxbury
Inpatient
Rehabilitation
Department
(857) 203-5117

OUTPATIENT PM&R CLINICS

West Roxbury
(857) 203-5117

Jamaica Plain
(857) 364-4964

Brockton
(774) 826-3124

Lowell
(978) 671-9000



The PM&RS Outpatient Veterans Signals Survey

Comments compiled from va.voice.medallia.com

01/2020 - 10/2020

- Every time I go to the VA, which ever Department, I go to they are superb in all ways I thank everyone that helps me (PT BR) 01/2020
- All of the Staff are very courteous (PT WX) 01/2020
- Good job! (PT BR) 01/2020
- I would like to compliment Dee Mitchell for the outstanding concern she showed for me, her excellent care and her Helpful advice. (KT JP) 01/2020
- All the medical care that I have received for my rotator cuff surgery has been excellent, from the surgeon to the physical therapy. Outstanding work, thank you (PT WX) 01/2020

- Care I received from Dr. Steere was very professional and helpful. She was very thoroughly and informative when examining me. Thank you! (JP MD) 02/2020
- I am extremely satisfied with the care and service I received at Jamaica Plain VA. (JP PT) 02/2020
- I like the treatment i receive there. (JP PT Conroy) 02/2020
- The rehab I am getting after shoulder surgery Nov. 7th has been well thought out and going very well. (BR OT Sullivan) 02/2020

- I have always found the staff to be very friendly and very helpful. (PT JP Mortorano) 02/2020
- They are always the best at taking care of the veterans they serve. (PT JP Cleary) 03/2020
- Fantastic doctors' nurses. (WX PT 7224) 03/2020
- I always get the highest level of professional care. (WX PT 7224) 03/2020
- My Amputation team is very friendly and helpful (WX AMPUTATION) 03/2020
- Everyone is helpful and friendly. My provider Jen DeSalvo does a good job explaining my therapy sessions. (BR PT DESALVO) 03/2020
- Very satisfied A+ care (JP KT) 03/2020
- From the time I walked into VA JP everybody was just terrific. Thank you all very much. The facility is very nice & the murals in the main stairway are lovely. (JP OT PAPPAS) 03/2020
- The VA in Brockton takes excellent care of me the staff is excellent and very easy to talk to thank you very (BR PT MARUCA) 03/2020
- I am very happy with everyone there. They are very helpful, and they really care about you. (LO PT) 03/2020
- Everyone is always super helpful, thank you. (JP OT PAPPAS) 03/2020
- I only go to the VA for everything- saved my life 3 times (BR PT DESALVO) 03/2020

- The personnel with whom we were in direct contact were pleasant, concerned helpful and knowledgeable about my personal problem. (BR DESALVO) 09/2020
- OT Therapist. Amanda Sullivan did a great job helping me gain mobility in my shoulder replacement. She is courteous, knowledgeable, and a great asset to the department. (BR SULLIVAN) 09/2020
- I am very happy with my VA JP experience. It has been wonderful. (JP CLEARY) 09/2020

- Great service Bethany Mceleney. (PT WR) 10/2020

PMRS Annual Assessments for Chronic Progressive Neurologic Diseases

By Bethany McEleney PT, DPT; Adrianna Hosch, OTR/L; Sarah Cleary PT, DPT; Jessica Allen PT, DPT

Evidence shows the benefits of exercise for slowing down the progression of chronic progressive neurologic diseases, such as Parkinson's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis. PMRS now offers annual evaluations for these veterans! The goal is to for veterans to be referred to physical therapy or occupational therapy as soon as they are diagnosed.

During an annual physical therapy evaluation, Veterans are educated on the importance of exercise and offered resources such as the Whole Health Program, GeroFit, adaptive sports, VVC PD Exercise Class and support groups. The Core Set of Outcome Measures for Adults with Neurologic Conditions is administered. During an annual occupational therapy evaluation, the FIM is completed and veterans are screened for referrals to Mental Health, Neuropsychology, Speech, and Social Work.

So far 46 veterans have completed these assessments and the program continues to grow! For referrals, please ask physician to enter JP or WX PT consult and BR OT consult.



Bethany McEleney PT, DPT
Board-Certified Clinical
Specialist in Neurologic
Physical Therapy

Adrianna Hosch, OTR/L
Occupational Therapist

Sarah Cleary PT, DPT
Board-Certified Clinical
Specialist in Neurologic
Physical Therapy

Jessica Allen PT, DPT
Board-Certified Clinical
Specialist in Neurologic
Physical Therapy

Wheelchair Clinic Curbside Pickup

By Krista Kingsbury OTR/L & Danielle Mortorano PT, DPT

Prior to the pandemic, wheelchair clinic at VA Boston HCS was almost entirely in person. Over the last few months our clinic has evolved to best fit the needs of veterans across all settings and utilizing new technology. Our patient population has been open to trying Virtual Care Manager as a first point of contact for visits and during this time we can orient the patient to services our clinic can provide as well as provide education on any environmental barriers that need to be addressed prior to wheelchair prescription.

While the weather was amenable, evaluations and deliveries of mobility devices were completed curbside. Many patients were pleased to not enter the facility for the utmost safety and still be seen by the team.

Our clinic has been dynamic this year and has completed power wheelchair assessments by video visit with the help of our home-based primary care PT (thanks Che and Elizabeth!) as well as our wheelchair vendors. This has allowed more timely care, but also trials in the veterans' home environment for better awareness of space requirements.

In a few cases, we have been able to evaluate some home-bound veterans virtually, determine their appropriateness for a power trial and complete that trial with a vendor. The chairs were then delivered virtually with the vendor, well before face to face visits were approved at VA Boston, therefore allowing us to continue to meet our patient's needs with minimal delay. Most recently, we were able to complete a virtual manual wheelchair evaluation for a home bound patient followed by a virtual delivery less than 30 days later.

Assessment of repair needs has also been a helpful result of VVC's. In some cases, we can identify the issue and order the parts all through virtual care. Then the veteran only is making one appointment for the repair instead of two appointments for assessment and then repair.

The addition of telehealth to our wheelchair clinic has been a silver lining of 2020 and the ease that it provides for many of our patients has improved patients' access to our services. We look forward to utilizing telehealth in wheelchair clinic in 2021 and beyond!

Krysta Kingsbury, OT



Danielle Mortorano, PT





What is Occupational Therapy in Mental Health?

By Sarah Rubenstein OTR/L

My first assignment as an occupational therapy student was to come up with a 25-word definition of occupational therapy, because, as my professor explained, we would be defining the profession for the rest of our careers, and she was definitely right! Even less understood than the profession itself is the role of occupational therapy in mental health, even though mental health settings are credited to be the birthplace of the profession. Our approach as occupational therapists emphasizes looking at the person as a whole, and how their illness/injury affects his or her functioning, making our profession a vital asset in the mental health recovery process.

OTs in mental health can provide both group and individual treatment, although typically our service is delivered in a group setting. What separates us from other disciplines within the mental health service is our use of occupation (defined as any activity which is meaningful to an individual person) and activities to achieve treatment goals within the recovery process. These occupations and activities can include creative tasks, games, worksheets, the practice of different coping skills, and creative writing activities. We teach and support the use of coping skills for multiple purposes including: management of symptoms; helping veterans identify healthy habits to support positive participation in their valued life roles; providing opportunities for day structure and the benefits of play and leisure; and providing education on the concepts of addressing the whole of the person. We educate about how each aspect of the “whole health” concept (encompassing social, physical, mental, emotional, environmental, and spiritual health) plays into a healthy lifestyle. We educate and allow the opportunity to practice new whole health ideas including yoga, mindfulness, and a variety of relaxation techniques. Additionally, we teach daily life skills such as medication management, balancing a daily schedule, goal setting, and monitoring daily health habits. We provide input to the multi-disciplinary treatment team on discharge recommendations via functional and cognitive assessments to determine the environment and services needed upon discharge to ensure the veteran’s safety, success, and the ability to be as independent as possible.

Therapeutic use of self is a vital component to our practice, as is developing rapport with the veterans we serve. The core of our practice focuses on assisting veterans to identify their unhealthy behavior patterns of emotional/symptom management, which requires the willingness of the participant to be vulnerable in discussing these areas for improvement. The camaraderie between the veterans allows for this by providing a unique group dynamic that is not found elsewhere. While sometimes the changes are not as easily observed as seen in a physical rehab setting, the rewards of working with the veteran population in this setting are immeasurable. Statistics are clear that more than 50% of Americans will be diagnosed with a mental illness or mental disorder in their lifetime, so even if you do not work directly in a mental health setting, you will encounter someone with co-existing mental health issues during your practice. Reach out to one of the VA’s mental health OTs to see how we can help!

A Battlefield Acupuncture Poem

By Aaron Eaton PT, DPT



“What is BFA?”
you say.
Well, it helps
to ease my pain.

Ten needles in all,
five in each ear.
To decrease stress,
to decrease fear.

Energy medicine?
Well, that’s not clear.
Vagus stimulation seems
more relevant here.

Parasympathetics
ramp up.
And pain
.....drifts

down.

With grace,
I move freely.
Smile
replaces a frown.

A Reflection Over the Past Year In PT Neuro Residency at VA Boston

By Megan Cohea



You could say I was a little bummed when I discovered most of our Physical Therapy care was transitioning to virtual. Not being one for telephone calls and facetime, providing care virtually was not ideal in my eyes. Never in my life would I have expected PT to so swiftly transition from helping physically assist people with walking and exercise to trying to communicate how to reposition a camera or operate an iPad. Coming in with no experience in an outpatient neuro setting, I quickly realized how uncomfortable I was watching patients with gait and balance deviations maneuver around their home. Being on the other end and knowing I could not provide physical assist should they lose their balance or worse, actually fall, made me flinch or brace myself on multiple occasions.

As I settled into this new kind of normal, I learned a handful of valuable lessons regarding communication, human interaction and the value of reliably fast internet. First and foremost, it quickly became obvious the importance of direct and detailed communication. Prior to this experience, I don't think I realized how much I relied on demonstration and hands-on corrections to achieve a desired outcome during my treatments and evaluations. Shifting to entire virtual care forced me to re-evaluate the effectiveness of my verbal communication and practice providing clear, explicit instructions on how to perform each exercise and test. Despite my best efforts, there was a steep learning curve as I came to recognize I now had to provide instructions for not only performance of exercises and tests, but also camera positioning, room set-up, and equipment needed.

As I entered into this rotation, we were approximately six months amid the current pandemic. Six months of many of my patients being isolated indoors with little to no human interaction. Many voiced that they had not seen family or friends the entire time, or if they had it was very minimal. For some of them being seen over a screen was not ideal and came with the frustration of figuring out new technology. Despite the challenges and frustrations that came on both ends of providing virtual care, I grew to recognize the unique role that I had as a PT providing virtual care to Veterans. First and foremost, and as always, as a PT we are blessed to have time to spend with patients and more often than not we have consistency with frequent follow up visits. Even though I may not have a personal preference for virtual care, I do think the value of regularly seeing patients and being able to actually listen to their concerns and coordinate with other providers is an essential role during these challenging times.

Last, but not least, this rotation reinforced the importance of patience. Patience for not losing my cool on days when it took over 30 minutes to login to my computer. Patience for trying to complete an evaluation as I saw a pixelated blob on the screen, only able to hear parts of every other word they were saying. Patience to listen to the frustration and lonesomeness of patients. And patience to recognize we're all just in this together and doing the best we can with the circumstances we're in.

VA Boston Amputation System of Care

By Randi Woodrow PT



VA Boston's Amputation System of Care continues to make improvements to better serve our Veterans with, or at risk for limb loss.

Prior to COVID, the program was already doing VVC (Veterans Video Connect) visits with Veterans who were unable to come to clinic for various reasons, so when it became critical that Veterans not come to the hospital for routine appointments, our team was well prepared.

This year, in addition to adding more VVC appointments to our weekly Wednesday amputation care clinic, we've added additional face to face and VVC amputee clinics on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month to accommodate Veterans who need those appointments (e.g. those who have dialysis or other appointments on Wednesdays). This supplements our Amputee Support Group on the first Thursday of each month. We added VVC appointments to Veterans' homes and to vendors offices which allow Veterans to be seen for initial and follow up clinic visits (for prescription and check outs of new sockets or componentry, as well as for annual and periodic checkups) by amputee clinic team members wherever Veterans are best served. This is extremely helpful for Veterans who are at risk for COVID, or for those who live far from Boston and have trouble with transportation, challenging weather conditions and parking availability. We also added weekly virtual amputee clinic team meetings on Wednesday afternoons which helps us case manage Veterans who need care and attention outside of Amputee Clinic.

We continue to provide Amputee Peer Visitors which, this year have been either by telephone, face time or Skype, and we hope to be able to return to face to face amputee peer visits whenever it is safe to do so. Our VVC Amputee Clinics and Amputee Support Groups have been very well received by Veterans and our community partners, which is evidenced by a significantly decreased no show/ cancellation rate. With the addition of a new prosthetist in amputee clinic, and several new prosthetists at VA Boston including a full time CPO at Brockton and a prosthetics supervisor, we have been able to improve the timeliness and quality of limbs being fabricated onsite for Veterans. We continue to work on completion of an onsite prosthetics lab in WX and an onsite orthotics fabrication lab at JP.

PM&RS New Staff

MSA



Ellen Merkle

Chiropractor



Bruce Fellows, DC

LPTA



Katie Sher

Happy Halloween
from PM&RS
BROCKTON



Three Blind Mice & 101 Dalmatians

Awards and Achievements

Congratulations

Sarah Rubenstein

passed the

Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner Certification (CPRP)

10/2020



Retirements

Ruthie O'Brien retires January 31, 2021



....It's been quite a ride!

**Veteran Outcomes for the Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation Program
West Roxbury Campus, Unit A-1
October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020**

Demographics

Total Persons Served:	37
Veterans Average Age:	69 years
Gender:	Male 86%
	Female 14 %

Diagnoses Treated – Number of Veterans

Stroke	11 (30%)
Amputation of Limb	6 (16%)
Orthopedic	6 (16%)
Medically Complex	5 (14%)
Cardiac	3 (8%)
Brain Dysfunction	2 (5%)
Neurological	2 (5%)
Arthritis	1 (3%)
Other	1 (3%)

Post Discharge Veteran Satisfaction Survey

Discharges from October 2019 to June 2020

Overall Customer Satisfaction:

There were 28 discharges from Oct 2019 to June 2020. Program received satisfaction information from 22 Veterans:

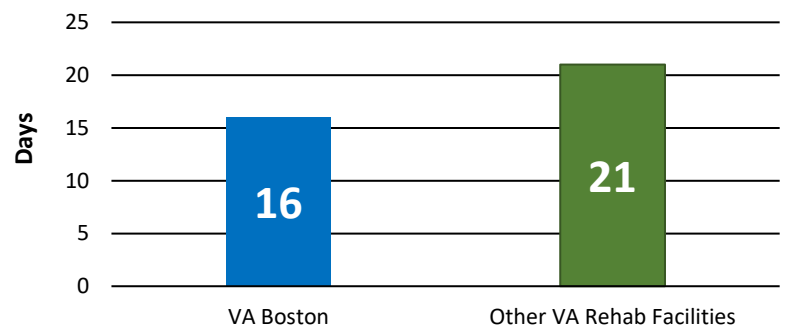
- I was involved with decision making during my rehab stay 91%
- The rehabilitation program prepared me for going home. 91%
- The progress I made in rehab met my expectations. 91%
- The rehabilitation program improved my quality of life. 91%
- If you needed rehab again, would you return to our facility 86%

Discharge Destination

Home/Community	27 (73%)
Sub-Acute Rehab Setting	10 (27%)
Transfer to Acute Care	0
Long Term Care	0
Expired	0

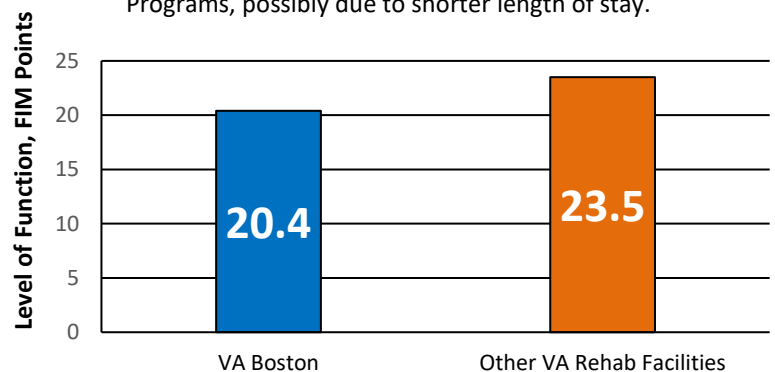
Length of Stay

VA Boston Veterans had an average length of stay that was 5 days shorter than other VA Rehab Facilities.



Level of Function

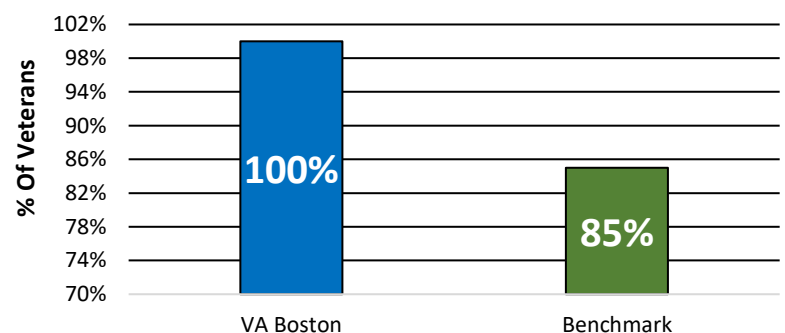
VA Boston Veterans gained independence in mobility and activities of daily living. Result were lower than other VA Programs, possibly due to shorter length of stay.



Durability of Gains made on Our Rehab Unit

Discharges October 2019 to June 2020

100% of our Veterans continued to see improvements in function 90 days after discharge.



Neurologic Physical Therapy Residency Program



Goodbye Megan

A year has passed, and our neuro physical therapy resident Megan Cohea has seen a lot. Her positive outlook, hard work and grit through each of her rotations and a pandemic has made the residency team very proud. Throughout the last twelve months, Megan has shown great growth in professionalism and clinical skills and did a wonderful job taking care of our veterans. It is with excitement and a little bit of sadness we say goodbye to our 2020 graduating physical therapy Resident. We wish you well, Megan!

Good Luck!



Hello Emily

The Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department is proud to welcome Emily Hagen PT, DPT as our 2020-2021 resident in the Neurologic Physical Therapy Residency Program. Emily recently graduated from Northeastern University. Originally from nearby Holliston, MA, she is excited to continue to grow her clinical expertise while working in the Greater Boston area. Emily is eager to join the knowledgeable VA Boston Healthcare System team to provide the highest quality of patient care. Emily can't wait to continue her family's commitment to public service and is honored to support the VA's mission to provide a lifetime continuum of care to all veterans. She has always felt committed to pursuing a field that enabled her to be part of something greater than herself. Throughout her residency, Emily will collaborate with a team of mentors to experience the full spectrum VA Boston has to offer in the neurology field. She will participate in Physical Medicine Rehabilitation services within inpatient, outpatient, CIIRP, and acute care units. Emily will also present staff inservices and guide clinical students as presenter and moderator of the student journal club. Outside of work, Emily is busy finding new trails to hike and preparing for the arrival of her new sibling (an Australian labradoodle) due in the spring. We are excited to welcome Emily to our family and foster her energy to grow as a clinician!

Welcome!

Meet our Occupational Therapists



Katherine "Katie" Langille OTR/L, Occupational Therapy Supervisor:

Katie has been with the VA Boston Healthcare System for 18 years. Katie graduated from Worcester State College in 2002 and worked in the private sector for approximately 1 year before entering her career within the VA. During her first ten years at the VA, Katie also worked per diem at the Life Care Center of West Bridgewater every Saturday, to maintain private sector perspective. Since Katie started working within the VA in 2003, she has mainly worked within the Brockton campus, but has worked within many of the various settings the campus provides. She initially started in the CLC and then floated between there and acute mental health. From there, she transitioned to half time outpatient care and half-time acute mental health. In 2007, Katie transitioned to work in the Brockton outpatient clinic full time, which is the environment she most truly enjoys. In addition to her outpatient area of interest, in 2008 Katie became a Driver Rehabilitation Specialist through the VA, and later passed her certification to become a Driver Instructor through the MA RMV. Katie continued working within these two programs until 2017, when she entered her role as the Occupational Therapy Supervisor. Katie still participates in her outpatient clinic on Wednesday's. Katie strongly believes in the mission of serving our veterans, and truly takes pride in the services our VA Boston Occupational Therapy department provides. Katie's father and grandfathers both served in the military, so she believes in treating all veterans with the care she expects provided to her family members. On a personal note, Katie was a two-sport athlete in college and was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame for Worcester State College. Outside of work Katie enjoys spending time with her husband and two children. Katie also enjoys eating, and jogging to reduce the impact of her love of eating, as well as the beach.

Katie Langille, Occupational Therapy Supervisor

Work Hours: Mon-Thursday 630-4PM

Second Friday: 630-3PM



Jessica Boutin OTR/L, WCC, ATP

Jessica has worked at the VA Boston Healthcare System since 2017. She currently is working with residents in the long-term care spinal cord injury unit and in the Wheelchair and Seating clinic in Brockton. She has a BA in psychology and MS in Occupational Therapy (OT) from the University of New England. She is certified as a wound care consultant and Assistive technology professional. When not working Jessica enjoys spending time with her doodle Cali, hiking, and traveling. Jessica appreciates working with veterans and helping them to increase their quality of life by volunteering time with the Brockton cycling clinic and summer sports clinic.

Jessica Boutin, Occupational Therapist, Wound Care Certified, Assistive Technology Practitioner

Brockton Campus, Spinal Cord Injury Service

Work Hours: Monday-Thursday 700am-530pm



Evangeline (Anne) Boyle OTR/L, Driver Rehabilitation Specialist

Now in her 24th year as an occupational therapist, with 13 of those years here at VA Boston Healthcare System. Anne served 6 yrs. in the United States Marine Corps following graduation from high school serving as a Navigation Aides Technician and an Embassy Guard. Anne graduated with an OT Degree from University of New England in Biddeford, Maine. Upon graduation in 1997 she began work in the outpatient clinic at WX VAMC. Upon the merge of the VA hospitals in JP, WX and Brockton forming the VA Boston Healthcare System, she worked as an inpatient OT at WX VAMC in Ortho, General Rehab, CARF Rehab & SCI. She also worked in the Wheelchair Seating clinic. Anne left the VA in 2004 where she worked in homecare for a short time before taking a job with Commonwealth Community Care doing much of the same type work as she did at the VA. She worked there until Dec 2013 at which time she took 1 ½ yrs. off to be home with her daughter. She began working part-time at the Brockton VA in Driver Rehab in 2015 eventually becoming a full-time employee with the extra hours working in the outpatient OT clinic at the Brockton VA. Anne has volunteered at the National Veteran's Wheelchair Games for the past 4 yrs. assisting with inpatient's and outpatients from the New England PVA Coasters. Anne has a 12 yr. old daughter Maddie, a cat Oscar, a bunny Snowball and 14 fish.

Evangeline (Anne) Boyle, Occupational Therapist, Driver Rehabilitation Specialist
Brockton Campus, Outpatient and Driver Training Program
Work Hours: Monday-Friday 700am -330pm



Lindsay Brennan OTR/L, OT Clinical Education Coordinator

Lindsay began her occupational therapy and VA career in 2008 as an inpatient therapist in the West Roxbury VA. Lindsay graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree from Saint Joseph's University in Interdisciplinary Health Services with course work focused on geriatrics. Lindsay then attended Tufts University and received her Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. In 2010, Lindsay accepted the additional responsibility of growing and managing the OT Student Program. Lindsay has expanded the student program by adding many contracts with local academic institutions and increasing the number of students completing fieldwork throughout VA Boston each year. In 2013, Lindsay transitioned to the Brockton CLC as a full-time occupational therapist. Lindsay enjoys addressing the unique needs of the geriatric population and working in the dynamic team environment within the CLC.

Lindsay Brennan, Occupational Therapist, OT Clinical Education Coordinator
Brockton Campus, Community Living Center
Work Hours: Monday-Friday 630am-3pm



Bernadette Cummings OTR/L, ATP

Bernadette graduated with her Bachelor's Degree from Stonehill College in 2005 and went on to complete her Master's Degree in Occupational Therapy at Tufts University in 2007. During her time at Tufts she was placed at VA Boston as an OT Student for her clinical fieldwork and fell in love with working with the veteran population. After graduation she was hired full time by the VA in 2008. Since beginning her VA career 13 years ago Bernadette has taken on several roles within the Occupational Therapy department including serving as OT supervisor from 2012-2017. She has also maintained her Assistive Technology Practitioner Certification through the Rehabilitation and Engineering Society of North America since 2011 helping veterans to gain adapted access to their home environments. Bernadette is passionate about using assistive technology to help veterans maximize their independence. In addition to her work in assistive technology Bernadette works as an outpatient OT serving veterans diagnosed with SCI, ALS, and MS. When she is not working at the VA she can be found balancing home life with her husband and 3 young children. Bernadette loves spending time with her large extended family and enjoying their shared passion for Irish Step dancing.

Bernadette Cummings, Occupational Therapist, Assistive Technology Practitioner
West Roxbury Campus, Outpatient Spinal Cord Injury Service; Jamaica Plain ALS Clinic
Work Hours: Monday & Wednesday 600am-430pm
Tuesday 600am-630pm



Jill Geller OTR/L

A novice at the VA since 2016. Stationed in bldg. 2/BR campus. Part-time.

Jill is a Working Dog. Intelligent, loyal, friendly, loving, hardworking, good swimmer, likes to rescue, trainable. Jill likes to work, play, eat, sleep, exercise and spend time in nature. This working dog reads-a lot! Blessed to work in a Service Industry and be with people during both the good and the hard moments to encourage, guide, listen, lighten, educate and support in the moment. She is dedicated to mission and service since the mid-80's. Jill is fascinated by the Brain and issues of Personhood; as such, extensive work history in the areas of Behavioral Medicine- In-patient, Out -patient, Day Hospital, Residential,

Community, Vocational, and Private Care. She has extensive work experience in Trauma informed care, Brain Based Impairments, Dual- Diagnosis. Jill had strong interest in Human Development and the intersection of the Humanities, Science, Art and Culture towards a more just livable world. She likes to think of herself as a lifelong student. Jill joyfully leading Psycho-educational didactic groups in Bldg 2 in the Brockton VA; supporting self-expression and self-understanding, with a strong sense of whimsy and humor to bring joy and caring, compassion and genuine interest to all her endeavors. Occupational Therapy came out of Moral Treatment and the belief that we are not labels but complex multi-faceted people and kindness, curiosity, a sense of purpose, personal dignity, respect and community can be curative and transformative.

Jill Geller, Occupational Therapist
Brockton Campus, Inpatient Mental Health
Work Hours: Monday & Thursday 830am-400pm
Wednesday 830am-300pm

**Adrianna Hosch OTR/L, MS**

Adrianna is now in her 5th year as an occupational therapist, with 3 of those years here at the VA Boston Healthcare System. In 2015, Adrianna graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Kinesiology at the International College before obtaining her degree in Occupational Therapy. Following graduation, Adrianna went on to work for a travel therapy company and worked in California, Iowa, Washington, and Oregon. Adrianna was able to gain experience in inpatient and outpatient settings during this time. Looking to be closer to home, Adrianna joined the VA in Boston in 2017 and works at both the Brockton and West Roxbury Campus. When she isn't at one of the VA campuses you can find Adrianna as close to the beach as possible with her husband Bill, their goldendoodle, Bruce, and their new baby boy.

Adrianna Hosch Occupational Therapist
West Roxbury and Brockton Campuses, Inpatient and Outpatient
Work Hours: Monday-Thursday 700am-330pm

**Krysta Kingsbury OTR/L, ATP**

Krysta has been an Occupational Therapist for 19 years and 17 of those years at the VA Boston Healthcare System. Krysta graduated with a degree in OT from the University of New Hampshire with a focus in Gerontology and Psychology. Shortly into her career at the VA, she became a Certified Assistive Technology Professional (ATP). She remained working in acute care in West Roxbury for 13 years with most of those focused in SCI and wheelchair seating and prescription, though has served on all units in West Roxbury. In 2016 Krysta transitioned to the outpatient team to work solely with the SCI/D and ALS veterans with wheelchair and seating needs. She finds enjoyment in technology and allowing veterans to access continued independence in their mobility to be a good fit in this clinic. She has also worked with the National Disabled American Veterans Winter Sports Clinic assuring that veterans are seated safely in all devices including their sporting equipment. In her personal life, she enjoys spending time with her husband and 3 young children, photography, going to the beach, and coaching basketball.

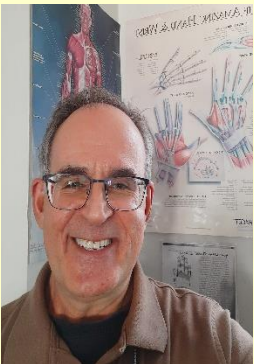
Krysta Kingsbury, Occupational Therapist, Assistive Technology Practitioner
West Roxbury Campus, Outpatient SCI/D and ALS Wheelchair & Seating Clinic
Work Hours: Monday-Tuesday-Thursday 700am-400pm
Wednesday 700am-1130am

**Huichuan Li OTR/L**

“Mr. Li” as he is well known, graduated from Tufts University with a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. He has been working for VA Boston for 13 years.

Mr. Li started with VA Boston at the West Roxbury as a contract therapist. He worked in the community, yet he enjoyed the veteran population so much he wanted to stay and treat them. Luckily, PM&RS was able to bring him on as a full time employee. “I am glad to have the opportunity serving veterans as an outpatient therapist”.

Huichuan “Mr. Li” Li, Occupational Therapist
West Roxbury Campus, Outpatient
Work Hours: Monday-Friday 730am-400pm

**Tom Pappas OTR/L, CHT**

Tom began working at the VA Boston Healthcare System, Jamaica Plain campus in September 1995 after graduating from Tufts University in 1995. Tom completed his undergraduate Degree at the State University of New York at Binghamton. Tom holds a Master of Science degree. Tom initially worked with the inpatient population from 1995 to 1998 and gradually transitioned to focusing care on the outpatient veteran population. Since being hired at the VA Boston Healthcare System in 1995, Tom has also worked closely with the orthopedic hand clinic and is the primary therapist responsible for veterans consulted to OT for a wide variety of upper extremity needs including postoperative rehabilitation.

In 2004 Tom completed the necessary requirements recognized through the Hand Therapy Certification Commission (HTCC), to become a certified hand therapist (CHT) and continues to take required upper extremity courses on a regular basis in order to recertify those credentials with HTCC. Since 1998, Tom has been the sole OT managing the Jamaica Plain Campus occupational therapy outpatient clinic and provides care for veterans with a wide variety of diagnoses. Tom currently continues to provide care for all veterans consulted to the VA Boston Healthcare System, Jamaica Plain campus.

Tom Pappas, Occupational Therapist, Certified Hand Therapist
Jamaica Plain Campus, Outpatient
Work Hours: Monday-Friday 730am-4000pm



Roni Pitts OTR/L, SCI/CARF Program Coordinator

Roni is a double jumbo from Tufts University with a Bachelor of Arts in Biopsychology with a minor in Child Development and a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. After graduation, she achieved work experience at the former New England Rehab Hospital and Kessler Institution of Rehabilitation, where she developed and pursued an interest in spinal cord injury rehab. Roni's adventure at the VA Boston Healthcare System began five years ago as float OT, split between the Brockton and West Roxbury campuses. Shortly after, she took a full-time inpatient position at West Roxbury campus where she could continue to explore her enthusiasm in Spinal Cord Injury. Roni is currently the Spinal Cord Injury Program Coordinator where she works very closely with her patients and the interprofessional team to provide an effective patient-centered rehabilitation experience for each veteran. She is also a graduate of the VA sponsored LEAD program and has worked on several process improvement projects at the VA. Outside of work, Roni enjoys coaching softball and playing soccer, but her greatest passion is spending time with her two-year-old daughter, Talia. Roni is spending her "free time" back at Tufts University, where she is pursuing her doctorate in occupational therapy. She hopes to use her research to continue to enhance the care provided to veterans with spinal cord injury.

Roni Pitts, Occupational Therapist SCI/CARF Program Coordinator
West Roxbury Campus, Inpatient Spinal Cord Injury Service
Work Hours: Monday-Friday 630am-300pm



Riley Rousakis OTR/L, Low Vision Specialty

Riley graduated with her Master's of Occupational Therapy from the University of New Hampshire in 2013. She worked in acute rehab and long-term acute care settings before finding her home at the West Roxbury VA in March of 2018. Riley's family has a history of military service and she has always been passionate about giving back to veterans so working for the VA has been a dream of hers. She works as an inpatient occupational therapist and rotates throughout the inpatient units including acute rehab, ortho, SCI rehab, cardiac, and general medical floors. After collaborating with the Blind Rehab team on a case Riley became very interested in the specific challenges faced by veterans with visual impairments. She went on to learn more about this area and in 2020 obtained a Specialty Certification in Low Vision from the American Occupational Therapy Association. She works closely with the Low Vision Clinic and Blind Rehab team to ensure that veterans with visual impairments can live their life to the fullest. Outside of work Riley enjoys skiing, hiking, and spending time with family and friends, especially her boyfriend Jared and their dog Callie.

Riley Rousakis, Occupational Therapist, Low Vision Specialty
West Roxbury Campus, Inpatient
Work Hours: Monday-Friday 630am-300pm

**Sarah Rubenstein OTR/L, CPRP**

Sarah has been an occupational therapist for 20 years, graduating from Xavier University in Cincinnati. Originally from Ohio, she relocated to Boston for a fieldwork experience and immediately fell in love with New England and the Boston Red Sox. Sarah has wanted to work with veterans since her fieldwork experience at the VA in Cincinnati, finding the experience of working with veterans with PTSD and other mental health diagnoses extremely rewarding. She has worked in a variety of mental health settings including a prison, dual diagnosis residential program, and inpatient settings. She has also spent part of her career working in skilled nursing facilities prior to returning to her passion of mental health when she accepted the position on the inpatient unit in Brockton. Sarah has recently earned her certification as a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner. When not working, Sarah enjoys spending time with her husband and two sons, yoga, reading and playing guitar.

Sarah Rubenstein, Occupational Therapist, Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner
Brockton Campus, Inpatient Mental Health
Work Hours: Monday-Friday 700am-330pm

**Amanda Sullivan OTR/L, Lead Occupational Therapist**

Nearing her 15th year as an occupational therapist, Amanda has been with VA Boston for 12 years. She graduated in 2003 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology with a focus on OT, from Sacred Heart University and a Master's of Occupational Therapy from Worcester State University in 2006. Prior to joining the VA team, Amanda worked at Tufts Medical Center and Braintree Rehab, where she was exposed to a wide range of injuries and diagnoses. In her time at VA Boston, she has worked across all 3 campuses in various settings, with her passion being neuro patients, especially spinal cord injuries. She completed the Rehab Driver Training Course in 2012 and is one of 3 Driver Training Specialists for all of VISN 1. Amanda comes from a long line of veterans and takes pride in giving back to those who have given so much for the rest of us.

Amanda Sullivan, Occupational Therapist, Driver Rehabilitation Specialist
Brockton Campus, Outpatient and Driver Training Program
Work Hours: Monday-Thursday 630am-500pm



Luke Testa OTR/L

Luke has worked at the West Roxbury VA since February 2017. After sustaining two knee ligament injuries playing high school football, Luke was exposed to the profession of rehabilitation and was drawn to a career where he could help others become more independent. Before becoming an occupational therapist, Luke attended the University of Massachusetts Amherst graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology in 2013. After his time in Amherst, Luke completed three more years of education receiving a Master of Occupational Therapy Degree in 2016 from American International College in Springfield, MA. Luke completed his final fieldwork obligations working as a pediatric occupational therapist in the Chelmsford Elementary School System and as an outpatient occupational therapist at the Brockton VA. Although Luke enjoyed both work settings he was honored to work with veterans. Both of Luke's grandfathers served in the military which makes the opportunity to treat and serve veterans that much more important to him. Luke currently resides in Boston, Massachusetts and spends his free time watching sports and keeping his new 8-month-old rescue puppy occupied.

Luke Testa, Occupational Therapist
West Roxbury Campus, Inpatient
Work hours: Tuesday – Friday 630am – 500pm



Sara Tian OTR/L, Adaptive Yoga Instructor

Sara is an inpatient occupational therapist at the West Roxbury Campus of VA Boston. She graduated from Boston College with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Environmental Studies in 2011. After working as a research technician at Dana Farber Cancer Institute, she returned to school to pursue a Master's in Occupational Therapy and graduated from Tufts University Boston School of Occupational Therapy. Since 2016, Sara has been proudly serving veterans at West Roxbury VA as an occupational therapist on medical, surgical floors, as well as inpatient acute and SCI rehabilitation. Sara is dedicated to working with each veteran to improve engagement in activities of daily living, overall functional status, and quality of life. In addition, she leads a weekly adaptive yoga group for veterans with SCI and coordinates the preoperative education program for patients undergoing elective joint surgeries. Outside of work, Sara enjoys writing calligraphy, teaching ice skating, and spending time with her husband and dog.

Sara Tian, Occupational Therapist
West Roxbury Campus, Inpatient; Adaptive Yoga Instructor (Inpatient and Outpatient)
Work hours: Mon-Friday 730am-400pm

**Kara Tramontozzi OTR/L**

Kara graduated with her Master's in Occupational Therapy from Worcester State University in 2016 with diverse clinical experiences in pediatrics and forensic mental health. Prior to starting at the VA, worked in subacute rehab at two local skilled nursing facilities where she maintained her Dementia Care Certification and adored working with the elderly population. She also worked per diem in an acute care hospital setting, in which her true passion unfolded. Kara started working at the VA in November of 2018; primarily in West Roxbury rotating through the ortho, cardiac, acute rehab, and general medical floors, and occasionally covers in the Brockton CLC. In addition to inpatient care, she provides outpatient veterans with pre-operative education and training via telehealth, in order to prepare veterans for their orthopedic surgery and functional recovery. Kara has been coordinating with the geriatric fellowship program in order to educate other providers on all of the services occupational therapy can provide to support our aging veterans. Kara genuinely enjoys working with veterans, and hopes to maximize the functional potential, safety, and wellness of each veteran served. In her personal time, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends and going to the Cape!

Kara Tramontozzi, Occupational Therapist
West Roxbury Campus, Inpatient
Work Hours: Monday-Friday 900am-530pm

**Kara Vautour OTR/L, ATP**

Kara has been practicing occupational therapy since 2011. She started as a student and remained at the West Roxbury PMRS department. She graduated with a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Massachusetts in Psychology and Master's Degree in Occupational Therapy from American International College in Springfield MA. Kara works throughout all the inpatient floors, treating patients with a variety of medical conditions. She is also licensed as an Assistive Technology Practitioner, specializing in access to technology and the one's environment through adaptive means. She is passionate about this as it allows Veterans greater independence, and improved quality of life. She strives to serve each veteran with compassion as they work towards goals of increased independence in self-care, daily tasks, and leisure activities. Kara also loves the opportunity to volunteer with the VA Boston Adaptive Sports Program and helping individuals try new activities and embrace life. Outside of work, Kara continues to serve as a First Sergeant in the Air Force Reserves at Westover Air Base in Chicopee, MA. She also enjoys traveling and running frequent 5k races.

Kara Vautour Occupational Therapist, Assistive Technology Practitioner
West Roxbury Campus Inpatient
Work Hours: Monday-Friday 730-4pm



Angela Viani OTR/L

Angela graduated from Bowdoin College in 2011 and worked in a residential facility for women with schizophrenia and in case management for a Massachusetts Aging Services Access Point before deciding to pursue a career in occupational therapy. She graduated from Boston University in 2016 with a Master's degree in Occupational Therapy. After a short time working in the private sector, she came to the VA Boston Healthcare System in 2017. She currently works as an inpatient OT with veterans in the Brockton Community Living Center (CLC).

Angela Viani, Occupational Therapist
Brockton Campus, Community Living Center
Work Hours: Monday-Friday 730am-400pm

